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The

Evening

World.

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PRICE ONE CENT.

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NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 1915.

18 PAGES

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16 TOWNS ARE DESTROYED, 23 DAMAGED BY EARTHQUAKE

TRENCHES TAKEN BY STORM, MEN AND CANNON CAPTURED, SAYS GERMAN WAR OFFICE

Paris Report Admits That the French Lost Some Ground, but Held the Lines Elsewhere—Russia Also Admits a Reverse.

BERLIN (By Wireless to London), Jan. 14. (Associated Press).—Emperor William was present during the spirited battle on the Vregny plain, to the northeast of Soissons, which resulted yesterday in that elevated ground being cleared of the French and which is described in the German official statement given out this afternoon as a "brilliant feat for our troops." In this engagement the Germans claimed to have captured fourteen French officers and 1,150 men. The text of the communication reads:

"In the western theatre of the war, in the dunes near Nieuport, and southwest of Ypres, artillery combats are going on. The enemy directed an extremely strong fire on Westende, which they will soon have entirely destroyed. Their torpedo boats disappeared quickly as soon as they received our fire.

[One report from Berlin to-day said Westende had been "helped off the map" by the combined fire of the allied land forces and their warships.]

"In continuation of their activities on Jan. 8 northeast of Soissons, our troops again made an attack on the heights of Vregny and cleared this elevated plain of the enemy. In a pouring rain and deeply sodden clay, trench after trench was taken by storm until after dark, and the enemy was driven back to the border of the elevated plain. Fourteen French officers and 1,150 men were taken prisoners and four cannon, four machine guns and a searchlight were captured—a brilliant feat for our troops under the very eyes of their uppermost War Lords.

[The above statement might indicate that other high personalities than the Kaiser saw the battle. A despatch from London says Gen. von Kluck is in command of the Germans. This would show the engagement to be of unusual importance. In some quarters it is believed that the Germans have begun another drive toward Calais. The official report from Paris concerning the fighting near Soissons declares the French held their positions around the village of Crouy, but were forced to give ground in front of Vregny, at which point the Germans report a success.]

"Northeast of the camp of Châlons the French attacked again yesterday, in the morning and afternoon, with strong forces, to the east of Perthes. They penetrated, at certain places, our trenches, but were repulsed by energetic counter-attacks and driven back with heavy losses into their own positions, leaving 160 prisoners in our hands.

Floods Drive the French Troops To South Side of Aisne River

PARIS, Jan. 14 (Associated Press).—The French official statement on the progress of the war given out this afternoon shows the fighting yesterday north of Soissons was determined. The French could make no material progress on the left of their Soissons line. They held their positions on the centre, but were compelled to yield on their right. The French troops are described also as taking up positions on the south bank of the River Aisne.

The text of the official bulletin follows:

"In Belgium the firing of our artillery was interfered with by the fog. Nevertheless the cannonading yesterday was very spirited in the vicinity of Nieuport and around Ypres. Certain detachments of Belgian troops blew up at a point to the southeast of Stuyvenkerke, the buildings on a farm which were serving the enemy as a depot for his ammunition.

"Between the Lys and the Oise, in the region of Lens, our artillery was successful in dispersing a group of German pioneers on the outskirts of the hamlet of Angres, and it bombarded effectively the German trenches to the southeast of the chapel of Notre Dame de Lorette.

"To the north of Soissons there was determined fighting all day yesterday. The engagement was localized to a section of ground situated to the north of Crouy. We hold only the first slopes on these hills. On our left in this field our counter attack made slight progress but without succeeding in recording a material advance. On the centre we retained our positions around the village of Crouy in spite of the repeated efforts of the enemy to dislodge us, but on the east, in front of Vregny, we were obliged to yield.

"The continued flood stage of the River Aisne has carried away

STREET SCENE IN AVEZZANO, CENTRE OF EARTHQUAKE



BIGGER THAN MESSINA IS LATEST ESTIMATE OF ITALIAN DISASTER

King of Italy Leads Rescue Force to Scene of Stricken Zone, Where Thousands Are Buried Under Ruined Homes.

AVEZZANO, A CITY OF DEAD, IS CENTRE OF DISASTER

LONDON, Jan. 14.—A news despatch received here from Rome says that the member of the Chamber of Deputies for Lipari has telegraphed to the capital that the disaster of yesterday surpasses the Messina catastrophe. The ruin is more widespread and the injury to life and limb will be greater.

ROME, Jan. 14.—With every hour, as additional and more accurate details are received, the horror of yesterday's earthquake increases, threatening to place it second in the list of similar catastrophes in Europe only to the Messina disaster of 1908.

The list of dead, dying and injured has increased rapidly from a relatively small figure last night to more than 50,000, according to an official announcement to-day, and it is expected that this number may be added to before the day is over.

The towns of Avezzano, Capelle, Magliano, Marse, Marsadalo, Collarmele, Cerchio, Celano, Lelli, Paterno, San Felino, Giosanarsi, Scurolo, Capistrello, Antrosano and Castromovine have been practically destroyed.

Pescina, Ortonamarsi, San Benedetto, Ortucchio, Cocullo, Bisegna, Balsorano, Canistro, Civitelladantino, Castellum, Pagliotta and Sorbo sustained serious damage.

Tagliacozzo, Ovindoli, Cappadocia, Santi Marie, Poggio Filippo, San Donato, San Stefano, Rocacero, Carsoli, Persoluto and Trasacco were all more or less damaged.

Every one of these towns shows a casualty list.

The full extent of the property loss has not yet been determined. Here in Rome priceless statues, century-old buildings and structures that for years have been the mecca of all visitors have been destroyed or injured.

EARTHQUAKE BELT 300 MILES LONG.

Although the loss of life, and possibly the amount of damage, may be smaller than it was in 1908, the area of the disturbance greatly exceeds the Messina earthquake, and covers the whole central portion of Italy, extending from Naples on the south to Ferrara on the north.

The most disastrous disturbances, from all reports, seems to have centred in the vicinity of the town of Avezzano, where 15,000 persons have been killed or injured, according to the latest official reports. Reports of damage in varying degrees of severity have come from Latium, Abruzzi, Umbria, the Marches, Tuscany, Aezila, Campania and Apulia.

The destruction of the town of Avezzano, a community of some 12,000 people in Aquila province, is virtually complete. There is good authority for the statement that not more than 10 per cent. of the population survived the disaster.

The earthquake belt is estimated to be about 300 miles long, and extends practically from one side of Italy to the other. In Abruzzi, Latium and Campania the quake reached its highest degree, described by scientists as "catastrophic," and in other places it varied between the seventh and the tenth degrees.

The Director of the Observatory at Rome declared to-day that the earthquake of yesterday was the most severe that ever had been recorded.

EMBEZZLER TELLS HOW VAMPIRE LED HIM TO THE TOMBS

Lure of Woman and Broadway Night Life Made Him Steal.

In his cell in the Tombs to-day Willard B. Thompson, formerly confidential secretary for William Harkness, capitalist and yachtman, told an Evening World reporter how he embezzled at least \$20,000 from his employer in a period covering four years, and admitted that "another woman" had figured in his married life.

This mysterious woman, whom Thompson refused to name, has been referred to by detectives who arrested the man as a "vampire who took from him his money and moral strength."

Thompson, however, declares the glitter of Broadway and the glare of Coney Island had absorbed most of the \$20,000.

"I don't want to drag that woman into the case," he declared to-day. "My wife never knew of her. It is true I loved the woman. But I do not love her now. I am through with her. Is it true that she telephoned to the office of Mr. Harkness and said I was appropriating his money to my own use?"

Told that some one had so telephoned to the capitalist, Thompson said:

"Well, she had made her threats, and now I suppose she carried them out. That woman did everything in her power to break up my married life. My wife was ignorant of her existence. She wanted me to run away. Then she said to me once that if I did not go with her she would telephone to some one. I suppose she has done so.

HE IS EAGER TO TAKE HIS MEDICINE.

"I am glad it has reached this point," Thompson continued, as tears streamed down his cheeks. "If this

BOY'S WIRELESS PLANT SHOOK UP BUILDING

Two Women Showered With Broken Glass When Mysterious Flash Comes.

A wireless telegraph apparatus installed in the apartment house at No. 251 West One Hundred and Eleventh Street by the sixteen-year-old son of Mrs. Ernestine Lewis, who lives in a flat on the ground floor, is believed to have been responsible for an explosion which shattered several windows in the building to-day. At any rate the existence of the wireless plant is the only explanation of the happening.

Mrs. George Goldman and her mother, Mrs. Selma Gold, were seated in the kitchen of their apartment on the sixth floor at 11 o'clock when an explosion nearby and outside shattered the two windows in the kitchen, a window in each of the bedrooms opening on the light shaft and two windows in the front of the apartment. A the same time a window in a bedroom of the Lewis flat on the ground floor was broken.

Detectives investigated and said that there was some sort of a blow-out at the junction of the copper wire and the roof wires used by the wireless plant. Owen Egan, the expert of the Bureau of Combustibles, was summoned to make an investigation. Young Lewis was at school at the time of the explosion and the wireless plant was not working.

AMERICAN GIRL WEDS GERMAN ARMY OFFICER

Ceremony Took Place To-day at the United States Embassy in Berlin.

BERLIN, (via The Hague and London), Jan. 14.—A war wedding took place at the American Embassy at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon. Miss Cecilia Jacqueline May, daughter of Col. and Mrs. Henry May of Washington, was married to Lieut. Wilhelm von Rath Jr., Ambassador German and gave away the bride.

NEW ORLEANS RESULTS.

FIRST RACE.
Stick Pin, 107 (Warrington), 5 to 1, 8 to 5 and 4 to 5, first; El Palo, 112 (Pickens), 2 to 1, 4 to 5 and 1 to 3, second; Coga, 115 (Burns), 8 to 1, 3 to 1 and 8 to 5, third. Time—1:14.25. Baretti, June W., Tobin, Hala, Joe Gay and Puck also ran.

MUZZLE YOUR PEKINGESE DOG? IT CAN'T BE DONE

Magistrate Throws Case Out of Court When He Takes Look at Nose.

Here's joy to all snub-nosed dogs. They need not wear muzzles, no matter what the Sanitary Code may say. Magistrate Marsh has just made that decision in the Yorkville Police Court in People, ex rel Lalor, vs. Nellie Winkfield.

Lalor is the policeman who saw H. N. Wertheimer of No. 118 East Thirty-eighth Street taking a walk in Fifth Avenue late yesterday afternoon, leading his prize English Pekingese spaniel, Nellie Winkfield, on a leash and handed him a summons. Mr. Wertheimer brought Nellie to court this morning.

"John D. Rockefeller has four of these dogs. Your Honor," he said, "and a woman exercises them every day at least four times in Fifth Street and the police never say a word."

The Magistrate declared that that had nothing to do with this case, and Mr. Wertheimer put Nellie up on a table to show His Honor how short her nose is. She is a tiny creature, with a tan coat, big soulful brown eyes and a little nose that begins nowhere and goes backward. She looked at the Court supplicatingly and grinned a silent grin of propitiation.

"How can any one put a muzzle on that dog? Moreover, you had her on a leash. I dismiss the case."

Nellie uttered a grateful little bark that sounded like the high notes of a doll and marched out of court wagging her tail in happiness at having established a precedent in city law. The case of Mrs. Charles E. Knoblauch of the Wyoming at Fifty-seventh Street and Seventh Avenue, who has been summoned for having her snub-nosed Boston bull out without a muzzle, is to come up before Magistrate Marsh next Monday.

GOV. BLEASE RESIGNS AHEAD OF HIS TIME

Pardons Forty More Convicts as His Last Act in Office.

COLUMBIA, S. C., Jan. 14.—With a record of having pardoned more prisoners than any State Executive in history, Gov. Cole L. Blease surprised friends and foes to-day by resigning at noon, five days before his four years' term in office would have ended.

Rumors of threatened impeachment proceedings against Blease had been rife in the State Legislature for the last few days as a result of his action in pardoning prisoners.

Before resigning this morning, Blease pardoned forty more convicts, putting the total to more than 3,000. Lieut.-Gov. Charles A. Smith of Timmonsville was sworn in at 1 o'clock as Governor until Governor-elect Manning is in inaugurated Tuesday.

CRUISER CARRYING LOAD OF MINES HIT BY LINER

Manitou Collides With Cleopatra, British Warship, but Explosives Fail to Go Off.

All vessels reaching port from Europe to-day report terrific and continuous storms on the Atlantic. Among the ships that have felt the full force of the storms were the Atlantic Transport freighter Manitou from London, Capt. Tribe, and the Strathcona, from Cardiff, Capt. Davis.

The Manitou came from London in ballast to take on a cargo of horses. On Dec. 24, in the English Channel, steaming at half speed through a dense fog, she ran head on into the British patrol cruiser Cleopatra.

"The cruiser seemed to leap right up out of the sea at me," said Capt. Tribe to-day. "We struck her an awful blow and my bowsprit was carried away and a lot of my plates forward were bent. What damage was done to the Cleopatra I don't know. Looking down on her from the forward deck we could see that her deck was covered with mines. It's a lucky thing we didn't set one of them off. As we were drifting away I heard a cry of 'Man overboard' on the warship. The Manitou was so badly damaged I had to put into Plymouth for repairs."